taken ill, and that Madonna Orietta watched most anxiously over them, calling in two physicians every day to their aid. Neri di Landoccio and Stefano himself, who had nursed the others, suffered most of all, the former being brought very near to death's door, and both seemed miraculously restored to health by Catherine's prayers and her spiritual power upon them.[1] " Take comfort sweetly and be patient," she wrote to Giovanna Maconi, Stefano's mother, " and do not be troubled because I have kept Stefano too long ; for I have taken good care of him. Through love and affection I have become one thing with him, and therefore I have taken what is yours as though it were mine own. I am sure that you are not really displeased. For you and for him together I would fain do my very utmost, even unto death. You, mother, have given birth to him once ; and I wish to give birth to him and you and all your family, in tears and in labour, through continual prayer and desire for your salvation." [2]

And to her own mother, Lapa, who bewailed her daughter's long absence and complained that she had been deserted, she wrote a tender letter of comfort, [cc] with desire of seeing you the true mother, not only of my body, but of my soul." " Dearest mother, you know that I must follow the will of God; and I know that you wish me to follow it. It was His will that I should set out on this journey, which has not been without mystery nor without fruits of great usefulness. It has been by His will that I have stayed, and not by the will of man ; and, if any one said the contrary, it is false and not the truth. And so I shall have to go, following His footsteps in what way and at what time shall please His inestimable goodness. You, like a good and sweet mother, should be content and not distressed at bearing all burdens for the honour of God, and your salvation and mine. Remember that you did this for the sake of temporal goods, when your sons left you in order to acquire temporal riches ; but now, to acquire life eternal, it seems to you such a burden that you say you will vanish, if I do not answer you at once. All this

[1] *Eputola Domni Stephant,* § 13 ; *Legenda,* II. vni. 21-24 (§ § 261-264)

[2] Letter 247 (355).